

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks at a Fundraiser for Governor Deval L. Patrick in Boston, Massachusetts

October 23, 2009

The President. Hello, Boston! It is good to be back in Massachusetts. It's good to see some familiar faces. Some folks I haven't seen before; I'm glad about that too. *[Laughter]* In addition to this outstanding team behind me, I know that my great friend Congressman Mike Capuano is in the house, so give Mike a big round of applause.

Yes, it is good to be back in Boston. I've got some pretty good memories of this town. I spent 3 years in the library across the river—*[laughter]*—trying to make sure I graduated from law school. I came back here; I gave a little convention speech. That went okay. *[Laughter]* And it was exactly 2 years ago today, on a beautiful fall night in Boston Common, that I received the endorsement of a man that I am proud to stand with today, a man who's absolutely committed to fighting for Massachusetts's families and Massachusetts's future, your Governor, my dear, dear friend Deval Patrick.

Now, Deval and I go aways back. I was mentioning to some folks in the other room, we've got a lot in common. We both have ties to the south side of Chicago.

Audience member. Yeah!

The President. South side. *[Laughter]* We're both Sox fans.

Gov. Patrick. Be careful now.

The President. I just said "Sox." That's all I said. *[Laughter]* We're both surrounded by three beautiful women in our lives that keep us grounded, which means they tell us what to do. *[Laughter]* These days, I have to actually compete for attention with a dog. *[Laughter]* I don't know if Deval has to deal with that.

Deval supported me when I ran for the United States Senate in Illinois at a time when none of you could pronounce my name. *[Laughter]* And I remember when he came to me just after I had taken office and said, "Barack, I've got this crazy idea. I've got this feeling that the people of Massachusetts might be interested in a different kind of politics. I've got this hunger to serve."

Now, I have to say that this was when Deval was a bit of a long shot. He didn't have money or big-name support, and the pundits didn't give him a chance, although some people thought it was a good ballot name because they were sure a guy named "Patrick" must be Irish. *[Laughter]*

But here's the thing: Since he had endorsed me when nobody knew me and I had no chance, I had to return the favor, even though I really wasn't sure he had much of a chance. *[Laughter]* It would be pretty hard to say, "Well, now, Deval, hold on a second now." *[Laughter]* "Have you thought everything logically through?"—when Barack Hussein Obama had run for the United States Senate. *[Laughter]*

But here's what else was going on. I had a feeling about Deval that I've always had ever since I've known him. And as I watched him travel all across this Commonwealth, listening to you, building his campaign—house by house, block by block, neighborhood by

neighborhood—I was reminded that Deval is confident enough to understand that this isn't about him, it's about you, that this was your campaign, that you were building a movement for change that couldn't be denied. And that core integrity of his, that generous vision of his that everybody has a part to play in rebuilding the best possible America that we can, that's something that I felt somehow would end up being irresistible. And I've come back to Boston today because I need you to understand what a prize you've got in Deval Patrick and why we need Deval Patrick and Tim Murray more than ever. This is the team that's going to lead the Commonwealth of Massachusetts into the future.

Now, I don't have to tell you we're in challenging times, not just for Massachusetts, but for America. You see it in your own lives and your own communities. Too many folks are out of work, looking for work. Too many hard-working families are being squeezed by the skyrocketing costs of everything on one side and shrinking wages on the other. They're men and women who've worked hard all their lives, done everything right, and now they're worried about whether they can retire with dignity and respect or send their kids to college, whether they can be the kinds of husbands and wives, mothers and fathers that they hoped to be, because of economic factors that aren't under their control.

Audience member. We need health care!

The President. So—okay. [*Laughter*]

So I know these are tough times. I know folks are hurting. But I also know this: For the past 3 years, you've had leaders at the helm of this Commonwealth during one of the most difficult periods in its history. And you've had a leader who's been willing to make tough choices in tough times without ever forgetting who he's working for. You've had a leader who's been willing to put the interests of hard-working families ahead of special interests. You've had a leader who's woken up every day asking what he can do on behalf of the people of Massachusetts. That's the kind of Governor Deval Patrick's been. That's the kind of Lieutenant Governor that Tim Murray's been. That's the kind of leadership that you need.

Think about what they have done. In just—[*applause*—]—think about what these guys have done. In just 3 years, Deval has delivered the reforms and real change that folks on Beacon Hill had been talking about for decades. He's taken on corruption. He's begun to rebuild the public trust by enacting the first comprehensive ethics and lobbying reform in three decades, transportation reform that's saved taxpayers almost \$200 million, auto insurance reform that's introduced competition and saved the average family hundreds of dollars at the time that they need it most.

When it came to jumpstarting job creation and turning the economy around, Deval and I, we've been working hand in hand. We worked together to enact a Recovery Act that's making a meaningful difference for families all across Massachusetts and all across America. Because of the Recovery Act, we've put a middle class tax cut into the pockets of 95 percent of hard-working families; that includes 2.4 million hard-working Massachusetts families.

We've helped stem the tide of layoffs in police departments and fire departments and schools all across this Commonwealth and across the country, keeping 100 police officers on Boston's streets alone, 215 teachers and support staff in Boston schools who otherwise would have been let go. We've increased and extended unemployment insurance for 16 million Americans to help them weather the economic storm, including nearly 420,000 right here in Massachusetts. We've made COBRA 65 percent cheaper to ensure that you don't lose your health insurance while you're looking for work. We've funded eight new affordable housing

projects right here in Massachusetts that will create more than 900 jobs, building 450 housing units for Massachusetts families.

Now, the Recovery Act didn't just include the most progressive tax cut in American history. It didn't just include emergency relief for families who've borne the brunt of this recession. It didn't just help out States with their budgets. It made critical investments in our long-term priorities. And that's been the essence of the Patrick-Murray team, that sense of a long-term vision for the future.

Our Recovery Act made the largest investment in clean energy in American history, which helped double the number of solar energy jobs right here in Massachusetts. It made the largest investment in education in American history, thanks to the effort of Deval and other far-seeing Governors. It made the largest investment in our Nation's infrastructure since President Eisenhower built the Interstate Highway System back in the 1950s, an investment that's putting Americans to work here in Massachusetts and all across America rebuilding roads and bridges and waterways.

Now, even as Deval is helping change the way business is done in Beacon Hill, even as he's leading Massachusetts through the most difficult economic period in our lifetimes, Deval has never lost sight of what makes Massachusetts strong today and what it takes to keep it strong going into the future.

He's solidified Massachusetts's position as not just a national leader in biotechnology, but a world leader, creating new jobs right now and a market for new jobs tomorrow. He's strengthened Massachusetts's position as a national leader in clean energy, convincing companies to create new green jobs right here in Massachusetts. He successfully implemented health reform so that 97 percent of this Commonwealth's residents today have health insurance. And because Deval and I know that the only reason we are here is because somebody somewhere gave us a chance at an outstanding education, he's worked to promote innovations in our schools and close the achievement gap for our kids and protect financial aid for higher education. And he's made the strongest investment in K through 12 funding in Massachusetts history so this Commonwealth remains not just the national leader in test scores, but an international leader in test scores.

That's not bad for 3 years. *[Laughter]* But you know, there's a tendency to take folks for granted, to ask, "Well, what have you done for me lately?" Look, that's understandable. That's part of what we sign up for. We asked for this incredible honor of leadership, and it means we are responsible for what happens during our watch.

And the reason I'm here today, the reason Deval Patrick is here today, the reason you're here today is because we know our work is far from over. We've still got huge challenges in this Commonwealth and across America. We're not going to rest until we solve them. We're not going to rest until everybody who's looking for work can find a job, until the markets aren't just about a stock market going up but about businesses hiring again, until the American Dream is within reach for anybody who believes in it, anybody who's willing to fight for it. We will not rest until that's happened.

It's not going to be easy. It's not going to happen overnight. But here's what I can say with absolute certainty: The work of forging a better future has begun. It's begun here in Massachusetts. It's begun across America.

We've begun to build a clean energy economy that can free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil and generate green jobs that can't be outsourced and pay well. We've begun to put

in place better standards for our schools and make college and advanced training more affordable so that we're preparing American children, Massachusetts children to be able to compete for any job, anywhere in the world.

We're closer than ever to health reform nationally that will finally make quality, affordable health insurance available to those who don't have coverage and bring stability and security to Americans who do and finally get some control over skyrocketing health care costs that are bankrupting families and businesses and our State and Federal budgets.

I mean, think about it. For all the affordable health insurance, world-class education, new clean energy futures, a strong economy that works for everybody, that's fair. That's what Deval has been about. That's what Tim has been about. That's what you're about. That's why you're here.

But as I said, it's not going to be easy. And so in the months ahead, as you're going around, you're talking to your friends, your neighbors, your family members, you know what you're going to have to be fighting against. You'll have to fight against some misinformation that's always out there in political campaigns.

But you're also going to just have to fight against the core cynicism that people have when it comes to politics. I know folks here—a lot of you in the past have been skeptical about whether your leaders can or will do anything about really hard problems. And you have every right to be cynical and skeptical, because year after year, decade after decade, you've seen progress stymied by special interests and partisan gridlock, whether it's on Beacon Hill or in Washington.

But I'm here today because I want to remind you, you've got a Governor who represents a better kind of politics. He's not perfect. *[Laughter]* His wife will tell you. *[Laughter]* And as he mentioned, sometimes he's stubborn like a mule and he doesn't want to act the part of the politician. He doesn't like talking about himself and his accomplishments. But he's smart, he's honest, he's devoted to the people of this State. He's asked for nothing but the opportunity to serve with—for you, to serve the people of Boston and Pittsfield and Worcester and Plymouth, to serve all the people of Massachusetts.

But we're going to have to fight for him. Remember, when this campaign began, it wasn't just about him, it was about you. What are you willing to do? How hard are you willing to fight? We ought to give him our continued support because this is when it counts.

We face big challenges right now. You know, campaigns are always fun—well, not always. I mean, there was some times—*[laughter]*. But there's an aspect of the campaign, it's all about, you know, projecting our hopes and our dreams, and it's full of excitement. And now we're in governing mode, and governing is always tough because, yes, there are conflicting interests. We're in a democracy; it's complicated, things take time, people argue.

Our problems won't be solved overnight, especially problems that grew over the course of decades. They're going to take years, in some cases, to get us to where we want to be. But that's not a reason to lose heart.

Our first patriots here in Boston, they didn't say, "You know, that British Empire, that seems really big." *[Laughter]* "I'm not sure about this whole independence thing." *[Laughter]* FDR didn't say, "I don't think we've got what it takes to get through this Great Depression. Fear's not so bad." *[Laughter]* "I'm scared." *[Laughter]* JFK didn't say, "No, that Moon, that's just too far." *[Laughter]* "Let's go someplace closer." *[Laughter]*

That's not what we do. We're Americans. We persist. We rise to the challenge. Think about how this country was built: people striking out, not knowing what they might find but understanding that if they just stayed put they'd never get to where they wanted to be. They were willing to take enormous risks. That's in our DNA. That's where we come from. That's how all these folks here gathered together. That's who we are. That's who we have to be today.

So if you're willing to stand with me and Deval and Tim, if you're willing to stand up and keep fighting for our future, if you're willing to once again prove that there's nothing false about hope, then we're going to do what those previous generations did. We're going to build something better to leave to our children and our grandchildren.

And so I just want to make sure you guys aren't tired. I want to make sure you guys are energized. This is the fun part here, fighting for your future. I want everybody on the battlefield. I want you knocking on doors. I want you to make phone calls. We've got a lot of work to do. Our finish—business is unfinished. But if you all are working hard, we're going to reelect the Patrick-Murray team and all of you are going to be proud about what happens in this Commonwealth.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:34 p.m. at the Westin Copley Place. In his remarks, he referred to Diane Patrick, wife of Gov. Patrick, and their daughters Sarah and Katherine.

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